

Guernsey, (H. N.)

A TREATISE

—BY—

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A TREATISE.

BY H. N. GUERNSEY, M.D., PHILADELPHIA.

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DEATH-RATES IN CHILDBED.

"Every vital truth has been born into the world amid pain and trouble, and has succeeded to acceptance in men's minds only amid opposition and trial."

In looking over the September number, 1878, of the "*Obstetrical Journal of Great Britain and Ireland, including Midwifery, &c.*," my eye was arrested by the above title of a paper by Alfred H. McClintock, M.D., F.R.C.S.I., LL.D. This gentleman, by universal concession of the Allopathic School of Medicine, stands pre-eminent in accuracy of statistics, so that what he publishes may be regarded as authentic.

His statistics for "Death-rates in Childbed" are made "from a large collection of cases treated in private practice by several men of character and eminence," and have been in compilation for a long period of years. By the term "in childbed" he means those women only, that have perished either in the act of parturition or within the succeeding four weeks.



In the above data he estimates the death-rate in childbed at *one per cent.*, "and this, mind you," he says, "among patients in comfortable circumstances treated at their own homes by competent and highly skilled accoucheurs," where of course these competent and highly-skilled accoucheurs would naturally avail themselves of every known means of saving life under such urgent and peculiar circumstances. In the lower walks of life, where less skill is brought into requisition, and the means for employing all that is known, are wanting, the death-rate must be much higher. Dr. McClintock further states that he has lately received from Professor Lusk, of New York, an interesting and elaborate paper which "contains one very striking fact which tends to support the estimate I have put forward as the true death-rate of women in childbed." This "striking fact" is as follows: "A careful analysis made by Dr. Lusk of the vital statistics of New York for the nine years ending 1876, shows that the total number of deaths to the total number of confinements would be, at least, in the proportion of 1 to 85." In the Philadelphia Almshouse, Blockley, during the years 1872-1876, inclusive, the mortality from all causes was, in 1109 cases, 38 deaths, giving a percentage of 3.42.

If, then, in Great Britain, where medical learn-

ing and skill have attained so great a height, one (1) in a hundred (100) recent mothers must go to an untimely grave; and if in New York, the metropolis of America, where medical education and ability are supposed to abound, 1 in 85 recent mothers must succumb to the fell destroyer—then, to place the death-rate throughout the United States of America at one per centum, would really be a very low estimate for Allopathic physicians. It is their own statistics, and death-rates which they themselves give, that we are now reporting. But in so important a matter as this, nothing should be kept back. They should tell us of the injured constitutions by bad treatment—the deleterious effects of their frightful medication—of the suppression of diseased conditions they cause, which linger in the system and gnaw at the vital force like a canker-worm, till the grave covers their deplorable work and the case is forgotten. Of the ninety-nine or eighty-four that survive, how many escape these scathing influences altogether? Add all these injuries to their already frightful death-rates, and some idea of the magnitude of their mortality can be entertained.

But let us turn to the contemplation of a more pleasing picture. So soon as I determined to write this paper, I addressed a large number of postal cards to Homœopathic physicians of

character and eminence, living in different parts of the country, for the sake of their experiences which should serve as the basis for statistics that could be relied upon to establish death-rates in childbed, under "*Homœopathic treatment*, pure and simple." The card of inquiry ran as follows:—

"Estimated from your own experience, and from the experience of your most intimate associates in the practice of Homœopathy pure and simple, what should be regarded as the average mortality among women in parturition, and the four weeks immediately succeeding?"

Eighty answers to this inquiry came promptly to hand, the sum total of which warrants the estimate, in accordance with the data of the the card, at *less than one-fifth of one per centum*, which is less than two deaths in a thousand cases of confinement. These statements came principally from our distinguished and veteran brethren who I know practice Homœopathy pure and simple; who I know rely upon the properly selected medicine in all cases of therapeutical necessities; who I know keep aloof from the Allopathic mode of practice as far as possible, being well aware that the latter leads to misery and death, whilst the strictly Homœopathic mode leads to happiness and safety.

Take, for instance, puerperal or childbed

fever, septicæmia, or whatever it may be called; also, phlebitis and phlegmasia alba dolens; the rate of mortality under Allopathic treatment in these cases is fully 30 per cent.,* or 300 out of 1000. It is only about 2 per cent., or 20 in 1000, under the Homœopathic treatment pure and simple. In puerperal convulsions, Allopathic rates are 25 per cent., or 250 per 1000. On the other hand, under *strictly* Homœopathic treatment, with a *firm* reliance upon the well selected Homœopathic similimum the mortality is only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which is 15 per 1000. And especially note the fact that, in Homœopathic recoveries there are *no sequelæ* to contend with, while the sequelæ attendant upon Allopathic recoveries are most alarming to contemplate. Look again at the figures in puerperal fevers, &c.—300 out of 1000 for Allopathy, to 20 out of 1000 for Homœopathy. Again, in puerperal convulsions—250 out of 1000 for Allopathy, to 15 out of 1000 for Homœopathy. This being the case, why is it that some Homœopathic physicians shirk their duty and resort to Allopathic measures, in such cases?

It is worthy of note, just here, that women having had strict Homœopathic treatment before and during pregnancy, have by far fewer irregularities during parturition and the lying-in

* Churchill's Midwifery, 1860, page 542.

period; and what abnormalities do then occur, are much more easily controlled. And still further be it remarked, as a positive fact, that the further we depart from strict Homœopathy, pure and simple—the more a physician drifts into and adopts Allopathic measures in the treatment of his patients, in these or any other forms of illness—the *higher becomes his death-rate*. “Comparisons are odious,” and here they are particularly so to the Allopathic fraternity’s mode of practice. About the year 1850, it fell to my lot to work through an epidemic of childbed fever which raged with great severity in the extensive 23d ward (Frankford) of Philadelphia. My obstetric practice was very large, certainly as large as that of any of the twelve physicians in the ward. I was the only Homœopathic physician practising in the ward at that time. We worked side by side in the same streets and in the same blocks. The Allopathic physicians lost a large number of their patients, whilst I did not lose even *one*, during the entire epidemic; and I have so far, in a practice extending over thirty-five years, during which time I have attended fully 4000 childbed cases, lost but one case of puerperal fever within the four weeks immediately succeeding confinement.

A fearful catastrophe to encounter under the Allopathic mode of treatment, and from which,

according to Churchill's statistics,* one out of every six dies, is *post-partum hæmorrhage*. With all their appliances—the cold douche, ice-plugs, colpeurynters, hot water injections, transfusions, and every other conceivable plan, except the right one, to arrest hæmorrhage and to save life, they lose *one-sixth* of all their cases of this kind. Then why should we, even in a solitary instance, imitate their bad example in the treatment of these cases, thereby meting out to ourselves such a mortality, which indeed is a cutting reproach to the divine art of healing. For we have it on indisputable evidence, that in all post-partum hæmorrhages which are treated by even moderately skillful Homœopathic physicians, when they select and apply their medicines according to the strictest principles of our school, the average death-rate is $\frac{1}{20}$ of 1 per cent. This is a loss of 1 in 2000 against $166\frac{2}{3}$ in 1000 for those who practice Allopathy according to their own statistics.

The statistics, as given above, which redound so largely to the credit of Homœopathy, will stand the test of close scrutiny and soon enough will all the jeers, jokes, sarcasms, slanders and condemnations of the real Homœopathic practice in these cases,—soon enough will all the abuses of so sacred a matter—come home with fearful vengeance upon the heads of those who

* Churchill's Midwifery, 1860, page 45.

perpetrate such wrongs. It is a *fact* that the more strict the Homœopathic treatment in *these very cases*, the *smaller* will be the *mortality*. I find my own experience to accord well with that of nearly all my correspondents; that they never use any other means for controlling post-partum hæmorrhage than the Homœopathic medicine, having no confidence in any other, and they rarely lose a case from this much dreaded occurrence. In a practice of thirty-five years, during which time I have treated fully 4000 cases of childbed sickness, I have, *truthfully* and *honestly*, never lost a case by uterine hæmorrhage, and I have *never* used an adjuvant of any sort or kind. I have been repeatedly called in consultation with other physicians in these cases, and have always seen a happy issue. Also, I have succeeded Allopathic physicians when, by their manner, if not by their words, they have shown the interested parties that they had no hope of saving life—and *these* cases I have *invariably* saved. I have found women almost insensible, pulseless and bathed in a cold clammy perspiration; “she is flooding to death,” the attendants would say. Calling at once for a tumbler of water and a teaspoon, I drop a few little pellets of *China* between the lips of the dying patient, and a few more into the tumbler of water, and I give her a teaspoonfull of the solution every half minute or minute, and so

continue to do till I can distinguish a return of the pulse; then I give it at longer intervals, and a perfect recovery is the final result. *China* is worth infinitely more than tens of thousands of transfusions or any quantity of brandy and water, or *any other* possible means of saving life, in these exceedingly dangerous cases.

Oh! "tell it not in Gath, nor let the sound thereof reach Askalon," how some self-styled Homœopathic physicians decry the teaching of Samuel Hahnemann on this subject, as exemplified in my work on *Obstetrics*. This teaching is *true*, and it is being successfully tested by the best Homœopathic physicians in the world, more and more every day. Those who tamper in the least with Homœopathic treatment, *pure and simple*, are sure to fail of reaching the satisfactory results above reported; while all physicians who are true to the law of similars will meet with a success more or less brilliant according to their efforts.

In the preparation of this paper I have had occasion to refer to myself, not for self-elevation in comparison with others, but that I might the better illustrate the value of Homœopathic treatment; for I believe all can do as well as I and even better, if they apply the law

of cure more perfectly than it has been in my power.

A brief recapitulation of comparative death-rates, and I will close :—

In Allopathic treatment of puerperal fever, phlebitis, phlegmasia alba dolens, &c., the loss within the puerperal month is 30 per cent., or 300 per 1000. In Homœopathic treatment, *pure* and *simple*, in the same disorders, only 2 per cent. or 20 per 1000. In puerperal convulsions—*real eclampsia*,—allopathic treatment has a mortality of 25 per cent., or 250 per 1000.* In Homœopathic treatment, *pure* and *simple*, we have a loss of only $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., or 15 per 1000. In puerperal hæmorrhage, post-partum, the Allopathic fraternity sustains a loss of $16\frac{2}{3}$ per cent., or $166\frac{2}{3}$ per 1000. The loss from the same disorder under Homœopathic treatment, *pure* and *simple*, is only $\frac{1}{20}$ of 1 per cent., that is 1 per 2000. The average mortality from all causes within the puerperal month from Allopathic treatment is 1 per cent., or 10 per 1000. From the effects of drugging and inefficiency

* T. W. Tanner's Practice of Medicine, 1874, p. 387.

in aiding the recuperative powers of nature at least 10 per cent. more premature deaths, sooner or later, making 20 per 1000. And what shall be said of the influence of all the heroic drugging upon the offspring? On the other hand, the further we keep from Allopathic treatment, and the more perfectly we practice Homœopathic treatment, *pure* and *simple*, the better for the offspring and the better for the mothers. Our statistics prove beyond question that our mortality does not reach $\frac{1}{5}$ of 1 per cent., less than two in a thousand (2 per 1000), and no sequelæ or bad effects from drugging. When such striking differences of mortality are so clearly manifested between the two schools, and at the same time are so easy of demonstration, what hope or incentive have we in borrowing tools from the Allopathic School? The conclusion is *inevitable*; and our *duty*, as physicians, to our wives, our children, to our children's children, and to the community at large, absolutely *demand*s of us that we obey, to the very letter and spirit, that grand and benignant Law of Cure which is embodied in the well known formula *Similia similibus curantur*.

We the undersigned, having examined and compared the eighty statistical reports, from as many Homœopathic physicians, on the mortality of women in childbed, recording upwards of 45,000 births, feel warranted in placing the estimates as given above in Dr. Guernsey's paper on death-rates in childbed, under Homœopathic treatment pure and simple, as correct.

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